



# ATSTAR

*Using Assistive Technology to Improve Learning for Students with Disabilities*

## *ATSTAR: Assistive Technology, Strategies, Tools, Accommodations & Resources*

ATSTAR - Assistive Technology: Strategies, Tools, Accommodations, and Resources – is an online curriculum that teaches multi-disciplinary school-based teams to build shared knowledge about students, their environments and their tasks. Using the ATSTAR system, teams can make informed, evidence-based decisions about the assistive technology needs of students.

### Who Uses ATSTAR

ATSTAR is an effective tool in a variety of educational settings, including:

- District-wide assistive technology resource teams.
- Campus-based teams of teachers, administrators, service providers in larger, urban school districts.
- School-based teams of educators and parents in K-12 settings.
- Pre-service teachers, using ATSTAR as the text in their college AT classes.

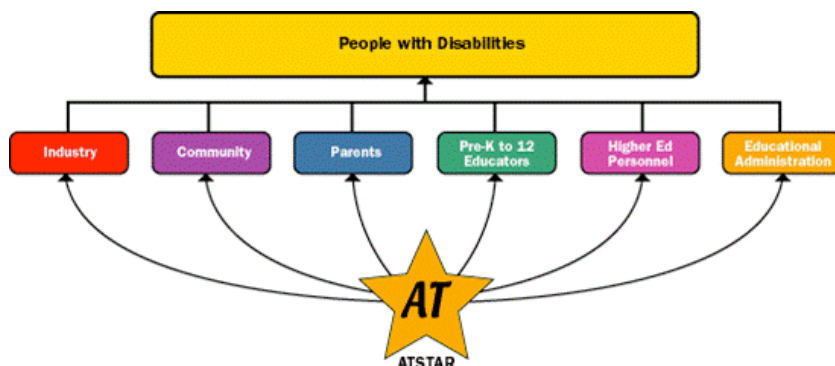
### ATSTAR Benefits

Use of the ATSTAR Curriculum has been shown to:

- Increase classroom participation and understanding of students with disabilities
- Improve the quality of classroom time by providing resources for teachers
- Create a valuable history for each ATSTAR student that can be used throughout their K-12 education
- Aid general classroom teachers as well as special education teachers with tools and resources for their students
- Provide an online data collection and robust accountability system to monitor progress of students and teams
- Help school districts comply with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) by building expertise of educators

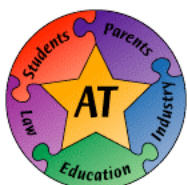
### Service Model

ATSTAR is helping schools move from the standard one-to-one, or "Expert Model," where a small core of professionals hold the majority of the knowledge and information, to a one-to-many model, or "Empowerment Model," where information resources are effectively shared with the appropriate people, at the appropriate times, and in accessible formats.



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## ATSTAR Activities

Activities completed throughout the course include:

- Orientation to concepts of assistive technology (AT), what it is and how to be effective in choosing and implementing AT
- Teacher training in the 6-Step ATSTAR assessment and implementation method for improved student educational outcomes
- Online curriculum, pre and post-tests, instructions on how to form and maintain AT teams at the campus level
- Ongoing support through the web-based ATSTAR community of peer practitioners and national experts

The ATSTAR System provides online data collection and a robust accountability system. Using the accountability system, leaders are able to review and analyze data to monitor the progress of teams, individual team members, and students profiled as they progress through the curriculum.

## ATSTAR Background

The ATSTAR program was initially developed with a grant from the Texas Education Agency through their Technology Integration in Education (TIE) grant program. The grant was awarded to the Austin Independent School District (AISD) and development of ATSTAR was a collaborative effort between AISD and the following six agencies: The Austin Community College, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin Harvard School, Sylvan Learning Center, Far South Community Schools, and Region XIII Education Service Center.

The grant effort produced a CD and web-based assistive technology training model designed to prepare instructional staff at the campus level to conduct assessments, collect data, and integrate assistive technology into the instructional setting. The grant participants included 56 public school personnel on 14 separate campuses and 2 private school personnel. Training was delivered to approximately 640 educators and has impacted over 1,800 students. Additionally, in the 2004-05 school year 30 districts in Central Texas participated in the pilot.

In 2005, Knowbility took over full ownership of the ATSTAR curriculum and further developed an administrative tracking engine and updated the curriculum. The ATSTAR Program is currently used by school districts throughout the US and has been incorporated into the teaching curriculum at several colleges.

## Knowbility

Founded in 1999, Knowbility is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Knowbility's mission is to support the independence of children and adults with disabilities by promoting the use and improving the availability of accessible information technology. We envision a world of barrier-free information technology in which children, youth, and adults with disabilities have greater options to learn, work, and fully participate as producers and consumers in the information marketplace.

We pursue our mission through three sets of related services:

- Accessibility Consulting, Training and Advisory Services
- Educational Programs
- Community Awareness Programs

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